Career Fair Prep

**What to Expect:**

* It will be crowded and loud
* Be prepared to walk a lot; Stay hydrated
* There will be lines; be sure to budget your time efficiently

**Before the Fair:**

* Research Employers
  + Know what the company/employer does
  + Know what positions they are hiring
* Be sure your application materials are career fair ready
  + Meet with a CAS Career Consultant to review your Resume and CV's
  + Build multiple resumes to cater to different employers
* Prepare other materials
  + If you don't have professional attire, go to your local thrift store
  + OSU offers discounted business cards and padfolios to students
* Create your Elevator Pitch, aka Professional Introduction

**Why Do You Need an Elevator Pitch?**

* 50% of employers make hiring decisions in the first 5 - 10 minutes
* 5% make their decision in under 5 minutes
* Outside of "Experience," the main reasons students are hired are:
  + Level of Enthusiasm
  + Interpersonal Skills
  + Confidence
  + Personal "Brand"
  + Networking Skills

**What is an Elevator Pitch?**

An elevator pitch is a compelling introduction about who you are, what you want to do, and why it matters. It lasts less than 60 seconds, and it is a way to begin a conversation with a recruiter.

**Breakdown:**

* 30 seconds or less
* "Self-centered" but focused on employer
* Formal Introduction
  + Name
  + Firm handshake (if allowed)
  + Major/graduation date
  + Desired industry
* 1-2 relevant experiences
* Demonstrates research of employer

**Delivery:**

* Face the employer directly
* Avoid "barriers" between you and the employer
  + closed postures
* Maintain direct, comfortable eye contact
* Speak first
* Offer a firm, polite handshake
* Deliver your pitch

**Maintaining Conversation:**

* Allow the employer an equal opportunity to speak
* Your Non-Verbal language matters
  + S - face the employer squarely
  + O - maintain an open posture
  + L - lean slightly into the employer
  + E - maintain eye contact
  + R - stay relaxed and avoid fidgeting
* Use "Non-Verbal Encouragers"
  + Ok
  + I see what you're saying
* Ask only questions you genuinely want to know the answers to, but avoid topics like:
  + Salary/benefits
  + Questions about other candidates
  + Personal questions
  + What does this company do?
* Ask the employer for their business card or contact information

**During the Career Fair**

**What to Bring:**

1. Resume (10 or more copies)
2. Padfolio or folder to carry your documents
3. Student business cards (optional)
4. Multiple pens
5. Breath mints

\*Students can purchase padfolios and business cards [here](https://careerservices.okstate.edu/students-alumni/develop-materials/).

**Tips for Success:**

1. Use the Career Fair Plus App to know which employers will be at the fair, what they are hiring for, and where they will be located.
2. Try to only wait in lines of 2 attendees. If a wait looks too long, come back later. Those 4 hours go faster than you'd think!
3. Leave the employer you are interested in the most for last so you can practice talking with other recruiters first.
4. Some employers will extend invitations to interview, so be sure to know your schedule
5. You will learn many names and do your best to remember them
   1. Keep a name journal with you to write down recruiters’ names/contacts

**After the Fair**

**Thank You Emails and Follow-Ups**

According to employers, one of the biggest career fair mistakes is taking too long to follow up or not following up at all.

* Follow up with a thank you email or card within 24 hours

Try to hit these points when writing the thank you email

* Who you are
* Where you met the recruiter
* What were your takeaways from your conversation
* How to contact you
* How you can move forward in the hiring process